



EUROPEAN UNION

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## **Joint Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the post-Presidential Elections situation in Belarus**

*“The United States and the European Union reiterate their call for the immediate release of the presidential candidates and the over 600 demonstrators who have been taken into custody in the wake of the presidential elections in Belarus. We strongly condemn all violence, especially the disproportionate use of force against presidential candidates, political activists, representatives of civil society and journalists. Taken together, the elections and their aftermath represent an unfortunate step backwards in the development of democratic governance and respect for human rights in Belarus. The people of Belarus deserve better.*”

*“The European Union and the United States recognize the serious problems with the electoral process and the vote count as reported by the OSCE election observation mission and urge the Government of Belarus to meet its commitments to the OSCE to substantially reform the electoral process. The Government of Belarus should take the steps necessary to create political space for political activists, civil society representatives, and independent journalists.*”

*“Respect for democracy and human rights remain central to improving Belarus’s relations with the United States and the European Union. Without substantial progress in these areas, relations will not improve. It is against this background that we will be assessing the Government of Belarus’s actions to address the current situation and to take developments into account as we review our relations with Belarus. The European Union and the United States intend to continue their support for and engagement with the people of Belarus and civil society representatives.”*”

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**P R E S S**

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